

Lee Rogers (testimony)  
MR CHMN

~ COST \$250M

GOOD MORNING, AND THANK YOU FOR HEARING MY BRIEF COMMENTS REGARDING HOUSE BILLS 4030 AND 4132.

I'M C.R. of DBURG & RECENTLY of WPA BD & DIR in GR BLANC

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE BILLS UNDER CONSIDERATION WOULD RAISE THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGE FROM 16 YEARS TO 18. BASED ON THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER STATES THAT HAVE ENACTED SIMILAR LAW, I BELIEVE THAT SUCH A CHANGE WILL YIELD NO SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF DROP-OUT RATES IN MICHIGAN SCHOOLS.

AS AN EMPLOYER FOR OVER 25 YEARS, A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER FOR 5 YEARS AND AN INSTRUCTOR OF STUDENTS FROM 5 TO 55 YEARS OF AGE, I STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT YOUR EFFORTS BE DIRECTED TOWARD MORE <sup>CONSTRUCTIVE</sup> ~~CREATIVE~~ SOLUTIONS....AT PROVIDING DYNAMIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT WILL CAPTURE THE INTERESTS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS AND FULFILL THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS.

A NEW STATUTE AIMED AT PUNISHING DROP-OUTS OR THEIR PARENTS WILL BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, FURTHER ASSURING THE LIKELIHOOD OF HIGH DROP-OUT RATES, DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM EVENTS AND THE CONTINUATION OF A GROWING FINANCIAL BURDEN TO THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE.

<sup>COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE</sup>  
~~FURTHERMORE, SUCH A STATUTE~~ WILL LIKELY BE UNENFORCEABLE, CONSIDERING THE NUMBERS STUDENTS REGULARLY OPTING OUT OF THE SYSTEM.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS. WHO WILL POLICE THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE OF STUDENTS AND WHAT OF THE BURDEN THAT WILL BE PLACED ON THE STATE BUDGET? WHO WILL BE PENALIZED? PARENTS?...STUDENTS? AND IN WHAT MEANINGFUL MANNER?

WITH OR W/O PARENT INVOLV

UNDENIABLY, OUR SCHOOLS CANNOT TEACH THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT TO LEARN. FORCED ATTENDANCE, IF IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, WILL INSTILL RESENTMENT RATHER THAN KNOWLEDGE. A DIPLOMA

GRANT FOR ATTENDANCE WILL NOT SERVE STUDENTS, EMPLOYERS, OR TAXPAYERS.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE THAT TO A LARGE DEGREE HAS BEEN TESTED WITH REASONABLE SUCCESS.

FIRST, IT IS LIKELY THAT PROSPECTIVE DROP-OUTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY THE AGE OF 14 OR 15 WHEN THERE IS STILL AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A VALUABLE EDUCATION.

SECONDLY, NOT ALL DROP-OUTS LEAVE THE SYSTEM BECAUSE THEY THINK EDUCATION TO BE A WASTE OF TIME. RATHER, A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER CHOOSE TO LEAVE DUE TO DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PACE OF LEARNING ~~OFTEN TAILORED TO SLOWER LEARNERS AS WELL AS~~ AND SUBJECTS IN WHICH THEY HAVE NO INTEREST. SIMPLY PUT, THEY'RE BORED. MANY ARE INCLINED TO HANDS-ON LEARNING THAT INCLUDES IN SOME CASES HIGHLY TECHNICAL ENDEAVORS. ALL DROP-OUTS ARE NOT INHERENTLY UNDERACHIEVERS.

TO SUPPORT MY POSITION, I POINT TO THE NUMBERS OF HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUTS WHO OPT FOR SERVICE IN THE MILITARY. DURING THEIR TENURE IN THE VARIOUS BRANCHES, MANY LEARN AND EXCEL IN AREAS SUCH AS JET ENGINE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE, TRAINING AND COMPUTERIZED WEAPONS SYSTEMS.

MANY GO ON TO GET A G.E.D. AND PURSUE COLLEGE EDUCATIONS OR ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURIAL ENDEAVORS. WHY? BECAUSE THEY FOUND AREAS OF INTEREST THAT THEY COULD WRAP THEIR MINDS AND ARMS AROUND.

BEFORE DROPPING OUT, MANY STUDENTS STILL HARBOR AN INATE CURIOSITY ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

I SUGGEST THAT THE STATE'S ISDs EXPAND THEIR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULA TO INCLUDE A BROADER RANGE OF FORWARD-LOOKING PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL PREPARE AT-RISK STUDENTS FOR A PRODUCTIVE LIFE IN SPITE OF THEIR APPARENT DISINTEREST IN A TRADITIONAL EDUCATION.

PARENTS OF STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS POTENTIAL DROP-OUTS SHOULD BE AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS PRIOR TO

THOSE STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO REJECT THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN TOTAL.

A REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF STUDENTS DO NOT VALUE A <sup>TRADITIONAL</sup> HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR DESIRE OR NEED A COLLEGE EDUCATION DOES NOTHING TO PRECLUDE THEIR CHOICE TO LEAVE THE SYSTEM. SUCH A REFUSAL DOES, IN FAR TOO MANY CASES, PRODUCE INDIVIDUALS WITH FEW USEABLE SKILLS AND FUTURES OF ONLY THE MOST MENIAL OF JOBS AND PERHAPS CRIMINAL PURSUITS AND PRISON.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION MUST CONSIDER THE APTITUDES OF PROSPECTIVE DROP-OUTS AND ENDEAVOR TO FULFILL THE POTENTIALS OF THOSE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS WITH A MUCH WIDER RANGE OF TECHNOLOGICALLY RELEVANT VOCATIONAL CHOICES. THIS MUST BE DONE WITHOUT ATTACHING NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS TO THE DIPLOMAS OF SUCH VOCATIONALLY TRAINED STUDENTS.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE SAVED FROM THEIR DECISIONS TO DROP OUT. YOU CAN NEVER SUCCEED IN SAVING THEM ALL. YOU MUST HOWEVER USE OUR RESOURCES TO SAVE MANY RATHER THAN PUNISH A FEW.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.